

CHAPTER 1

SAFETY AND HEALTH PROGRAM

1.1 PURPOSE

This Chapter sets forth the policy, authorities, and responsibilities for administering a comprehensive Safety and Health Program (SHP) for the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).

1.2 POLICY

A. It is AMS policy to develop and implement a comprehensive SHP that identifies and strives to eliminate employee exposure to existing and potentially hazardous working conditions and/or situations, and minimize losses incurred by the Agency, its employees, and the general public as a result of work-related injuries, illnesses, and property damage.

B. This SHP is applicable to all AMS operations and activities. It specifically addresses the safety and health of AMS personnel. AMS does not have the authority to enforce safety and health matters for employees of private facilities where AMS employees work. AMS employees shall at no time be subjected to or required to work in or around conditions which are considered to be immediately dangerous to life or health (imminent danger).

1.3 STANDARDS AND PROGRAM ELEMENTS

A. The U.S. Department of Labor's occupational safety and health standards and program elements, promulgated under Sections 6, 19, and 24 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (Public Law 91-596); Executive Order 12196 (Occupational Safety and Health Programs for Federal Employees); and 29 CFR Part 1960 (Basic Program Elements for Federal Employee Occupational Safety and Health Programs and Related Matters), are adopted as the USDA and the AMS basic occupational safety and health standards and program elements.

B. AMS is responsible for developing Agency-wide safety policies and procedures for unique Agency problems and for coordinating those standards with the Department and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

1.4 AUTHORITIES

The AMS SHP is established pursuant to the following authorities:

A. Public Law 91-596, Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970.

B. Executive Order 12196, Occupational Safety and Health Programs for Federal Employees.

C. Title 29, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1960, Basic Program Elements for Federal Employee Occupational Safety and Health Programs and Related Matters.

D. Departmental safety and occupational health regulations.

1.5 RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The Associate Administrator serves as the AMS Designated Agency Safety and Health Official (DASHO) with responsibility for developing and monitoring a comprehensive occupational SHP to ensure that all AMS employees work in a safe environment. The DASHO is responsible for:

1. Providing executive leadership in the development, promulgation, and implementation of occupational safety and health policies and procedures;
2. Ensuring that adequate staff and resources are available to implement the AMS SHP at all operational levels consistent with Agency priorities; and,
3. Exercising final authority in all safety and health matters that involve the jurisdiction of more than one program.

B. The Safety and Occupational Health Program Manager is responsible for:

1. Managing the daily operations of the AMS SHP under the leadership of the DASHO.
2. Establishing objectives, goals, and procedural reviews for reducing or eliminating job-related injuries, illnesses, and property damage caused by accidents.
3. Developing safety and health policies for AMS operations.
4. Inspecting AMS-controlled facilities and evaluating work conditions at nongovernment-owned facilities to ensure a safe and healthful work environment for AMS employees.
5. Evaluating the effectiveness of the SHP annually.
6. Assisting managers and supervisors in attaining the timely abatement of unsafe or unhealthful working conditions to which AMS personnel may be subjected.
7. Coordinating SHP activities with the Department, AMS management, unions, trade groups, etc., as needed.
8. Representing AMS at the Field Federal Safety and Health Council and similar professional groups.
9. Providing oversight of AMS activities to ensure full compliance with all safety and health rules and regulations.
10. Collecting and disseminating data pertaining to the accidents, injuries, and health problems affecting personnel.
11. Participating in the development of safety and health training courses for supervisors, managers, and employees.

C. AMS Deputy Administrators are responsible for:

1. Designating program safety coordinator(s), in writing, and providing them with appropriate training and equipment to assist in implementing and monitoring the AMS SHP within their program (including regional offices, field offices, and laboratories). A copy of the letter of designation shall be forwarded to the DASHO and agency safety program manager.
2. Ensuring that their program's work environments are free from or protected against recognized hazards that may cause death or serious physical harm.
3. Ensuring that their program adheres to and complies with all applicable safety and health policies, procedures, and programs.
4. Ensuring that safety and health responsibilities (consistent with the employee's assigned responsibilities and authorities) are integrated within the performance standards of all managers, supervisors, and program collateral duty safety officers.
5. Ensuring that safety is considered in job planning and execution.
6. Ensuring that safety and health complaints made by program employees are promptly investigated by a management official.
7. Ensuring that their program's safety and occupational health responsibilities are being addressed in their annual budget.

D. Associate Deputy Administrators and Regional Directors are responsible for:

1. Providing direct assistance to their deputy administrator in ensuring implementation of, and compliance with, the policies, procedures, and requirements of the AMS SHP.
2. Ensuring that all managers and supervisors assigned to their supervision are implementing the AMS SHP as applicable.

E. Program Safety Coordinators (PSC's) are responsible for:

1. Assisting their deputy administrator in administering, implementing, and monitoring the AMS SHP.
2. Ensuring that safety and occupational health inspections are being conducted within their program as required by, and in accordance with, the requirements of this Handbook and all applicable safety and health regulations.
3. Carrying out other safety and health projects as assigned by their deputy administrator.
4. Attending training that meets the requirements of 29 CFR Part 1960 within 6 months of appointment as the PSC.
5. Dedicating an adequate and appropriate percent of their working hours to safety and health.

F. All Branch Chiefs and Heads of Offices and Laboratory Directors are responsible for:

1. Sharing with their respective deputy administrator and associate deputy administrator(s) the responsibility for implementing and ensuring compliance with the requirements of the AMS SHP.
2. Ensuring that all AMS supervisors and employees assigned to their supervision work in a safe and healthful environment.

G. Supervisors are responsible for:

1. Assisting management in operating an effective safety and occupational health program.
2. Investigating, reporting, and documenting all job-related accidents, injuries, or illnesses.
3. Briefing all employees on safety and health policies and procedures applicable to the worksite, and enforcing such policies.
4. Conducting and documenting walk-throughs of their work area to ensure that employees are not exposed to imminent danger hazards, and initiating action to correct **any** conditions which expose AMS employees to hazards. (Handwritten notes kept in a notebook are acceptable. Records must be kept for 1 year.)
5. Implementing procedures to assist any disabled employees in case of emergency evacuation of the facility.
6. Enforcing all safety and health rules as they affect AMS employees.
7. Ensuring that the proper personal protective equipment is available, training employees in its proper use, and ensuring it is maintained in good working order and utilized when necessary.
8. Ensuring that safety and health training (including training employees to recognize and eliminate hazards) is provided to AMS employees. Refresher training will be conducted annually or when job assignments or operational procedures change.
9. Encouraging and promoting employee suggestions on how to improve safety and health in the workplace.
10. Ordering work stoppages when serious and imminent danger safety hazards threaten employees.

H. AMS employees are responsible for:

1. Reading and complying with all safety and health policies issued by AMS and private-sector management in a private-sector workplace.
2. Performing tasks in a safe manner.
3. Reporting to their immediate supervisor all job-related accidents, illnesses, or injuries in

which they are involved.

4. Reporting job-related hazardous conditions to their immediate supervisor.
5. Wearing and maintaining required personal protective equipment.

[Return](#) to the AMS Issuances Table of Contents